

EXHIBIT 12
DATE 3/23/07
SB 350

To: House Judiciary Committee
From: Margaret Hencz/Dist 4 HRDC Domestic Violence Program
Date: March 23, 2007
Re: SB 350 - Crime of tampering with or destroying communication equipment

Good morning, Madame Chair and Members of the House Judiciary committee. I am writing in support of SB 350. My name is Margaret Hencz and I am the program director of the District IV HRDC Domestic Violence Program in Havre.

I wholeheartedly support this bill because all too often we hear stories from victims who were left without means to communicate because the phone was destroyed during an assault. This is a common tactic used by abusers to further isolate and control their partners. When this happens it creates a situation where a person has no way to call law enforcement or get medical attention.

I would like to share a story with you about a victim in our area that reported to us that she had been assaulted in her home for hours. She had an infant with her that was also injured in the assault. When her partner finally left the house she could not call for assistance because he had destroyed the home phone and also the cell phone. Fearing he might return at any time, she had to risk leaving the home and walk with her infant to get help. She lived in a remote area and she had to walk a long distance to find a phone and get medical attention. It was winter. They were cold, injured and she feared for her life and that of her child. By destroying the phone it creates additional risk to victims; therefore, it should be charged as an additional crime.

Please support this bill that recognizes the grave situation victims are faced with when a communication device is destroyed.

I would like to thank the members of the committee for listening to my testimony and once again I urge you to support this bill.

Please don't hesitate to call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Margaret Hencz
Program Director/Domestic Violence Program
District IV HRDC
Havre, MT 59501
406-265-6743